

Queen Anne's
about 1710

8223.2
36

21

[1]

A
MEMORIAL
TOUCHING THE
NATURE and present STATE
OF THE
TRADE
TO
AFRICA.

ALL the European Nations, who Trade to the Coast of Africa, particularly the Dutch, French, Danes, Brandenburgs, &c. have, from the nature and uncommon Circumstances of that Trade, found it impracticable to carry it on, securely and advantageously, by any other Method, than that of a JOINT-STOCK, with exclusive and other encouraging Privileges: And the several Trading Companies which they have Establish'd, for that purpose, are always protected and defended by the Laws of their respective Countries; which are of the same Force with them, as our Acts of Parliament are with us.

A

All



48

10

11

318.

All these Foreign Companies have, for the Improvement of their Trade, found it necessary to enter into Alliances and Confederations, with as many of the Petty Kings and little Sovereign States, along the Coast of *Africa*, as possibly they could; thereby endeavouring to enhance the Trade of the several Countries belonging to their respective Confederates.

They found it likewise impracticable to support and preserve these Alliances, without engaging the Natives Friendship, by certain agreeable Presents, from Time to Time, on the one hand; and maintaining a constant coercive Power on the Coast, for curbing the natural Insolencies and Barbarity of the generality of their Tempers, on the other hand, as Occasion may happen to require: And for that end, all the aforesaid Companies have erected, and do always maintain Forts, Factories, and Settlements along the Coast: And such of these Forts and Settlements, as are commonly best provided and supply'd, from Time to Time, with *European* Goods and Necessaries, proper for the Trade of *Guinea*, and whose Proprietors, or their Agents, are most dexterous in managing the aforesaid Alliances, are always most likely, of course, to succeed in enhancing and carrying away with them the greatest Part of that Trade.

But indeed the *Dutch* Company has so far got the Start of all the others abovemention'd, by encreasing the Number of their Fortifications, and, extending their Alliances, and in the Experience of the properest Methods of practising upon the Natives, according to the several Circumstances of such different Emergencies as do and must daily happen, that hitherto all the aforesaid Companies, jointly considered, are scarcely to be look'd upon as Competitors with the *Dutch* alone, in the Trade of the Gold-Coast.

The *English* likewise, ever since they got the first Footing on the Coast of *Africa*, in the Reign of King *James* the First, have traded thither by Companies, one after another, with JOINT-STOCKS; and have endeavoured, all along, to erect Forts and Settlements, for the aforesaid Ends: But none of these Companies being ever Establish'd with the Sanction of a Parliamentary Constitution, a Door was always left open, for frequently disturbing their Measures, embarrassing their Designs, and interrupting the Progress of their Trade and Acquisitions; and that chiefly upon Account of a divided Interest, which has been always, more or less, keep'd up among our selves, both at Home and Abroad; in-somuch, that, at several Periods of Time, needless to be here mention'd, our Trade to *Africa* has been, oftener than once, wholly relinquish'd, for some Years together, by reason of the Intrusion and irregular Proceedings of Interlopers, and the destructive Consequences which Divisions never fail to produce in any such Undertakings.

Yet

Yet after the present Royal *African*-Company was, in the Year 1672. Establish'd by a New Charter; with exclusive Privileges, and had the Countenance and Protection of the Government at the Time; with few or no Interruptions, for a course of some Years together; They purchas'd, erected, maintain'd, and repair'd a considerable Number of Forts, Factories, and Settlements, on the Coast of *Africa*; They contracted many Alliances with the Natives, and renewed the same, from Time to Time, according as the Circumstances of their Affairs required; They introduced and encourag'd the making of several sorts of Woollen and other Manufactures, proper for the Trade of *Guiney*, not formerly manufactured in *England*, and reduced the making thereof to a staple and settled Goodness; They exported yearly upwards of 70000 Pounds worth of the said Woollen and other Manufactures; and gave far better Prices for the same, than what usually is now given for the like; They furnish'd the Western Plantations with constant Supplies of considerable Numbers of *Negroes*, at very moderate Rates; the Produce of whose Labour has added very much to the Publick Revenue and Riches of this Kingdom; They imported considerable Quantities of Gold-Dust, Elephant-Teeth, Redwood, and other Goods fit for being manufactured at Home; and in effect manag'd Matters so, both Abroad and at Home, as that, for several Years together, their Trade did not only produce an annual Dividend of certain Profits, to all the particular Adventurers in the Joint-Stock, besides a Multiplication of their Capital, but likewise several other Publick and National Advantages to the whole Kingdom, and the *British* Plantations in general.

From all which it may be rationally concluded, that, if the present Company's Charter had been confirmed, by an Act of Parliament, so as to have prevented the many Obstructions and Difficulties, which they have been forced to struggle with, these Twenty Years last past, the *British* Interest on the Coast of *Africa*, had been, by this Time, in a much more flourishing Condition than can possibly be consistent with a precarious Constitution, which admits of all the pernicious Consequences that must naturally attend a divided Interest, especially in a Trade where we have all the Stratagems and united Power of such formidable Foreign Competitors to deal with.

However, so it happened, that, soon after the Revolution, the Interlopers breaking in upon the Priviledges of the Royal *African*-Company's Charter; and thereafter the Parliament being, in the Year 1697. induced, for an Experiment, to grant a Permission to all his Majesty's Subjects, as well as the Company, to Trade to and from *Africa*, they paying to the Company a Duty of Ten *per Cent.* upon their Exports, towards defraying the Charge and Expences of their Forts and Settlements in those Parts; the Trade has ever since fallen into great Disorders and Confusions. For,

First,

First, The unbounded Liberty allowed, by the said Act, to all Persons whatsoever, to Trade to *Africa*, without any uniform Influence, or pre-concerted Rules of Management, has rendered the *British* Intrest on that Coast so divided, and the Consequences attending the different Methods of Trading there so very precarious, that the Natives of *Africa* have thereby an Opportunity of imposing what they please, as well upon the separate Traders, as upon the Company, to the general Prejudice of this Kingdom; insomuch, that, since the Commencement of the Liberty allowed by the said Act, the Prices of Goods and Merchandizes imported into *Guiney*, are diminished to at least the one half of what they produced formerly, and also the Prices of *Negroes* are advanced to much more than the double of their former Prices: Which evidently proceeds from the Advantage which the Natives take of their having variety of Chap-Men; whereas before, they could have recourse only to the Company's Settlements and Ware-houses.

Secondly, Our Foreign Rivals in this Commerce do, upon all Occasions, foment and encourage those Divisions which must unavoidably happen betwixt Traders who have different Interests; and they instruct the Natives how to make their Advantage from thence, because these our Foreign Competitors do hope that, if all *British* Adventurers be once discourag'd, so as to relinquish their Forts and Settlements, the former may engross this Traffick wholly to themselves; and they are so bent upon their own Profit, that they not only instigate the Natives chiefly against the Royal *African*-Company (as their most formidable and puissant Competitor) but have likewise in conjunction with that of their Native Allies, frequently endeavour'd to extirpate and destroy the *British* Commerce there; as the *Dutch* did the *English* Factories in the Spice-Islands, and other parts of *India*, which could never be regain'd.

Thirdly, Tho' the Novelty of a Constitution laying the Trade to *Africa* open by a Law, did at first tempt many Inconsiderate Persons, who knew little or nothing of the Nature and Circumstances of that Trade, to adventure their Stocks in Trading separately to *Africa*; insomuch, that in one Year, they sent Eighty One Vessels thither; yet their Losses and Disappointments, for the Reasons already given, have been such, that for some Years last past, they have not sent out above One Fifth of that number of Ships *per Annum*; so that it may be justly said, that they have not only done themselves, and the Company too, abundance of damage; but have likewise been the Instruments of endangering the Total loss of that Trade to the Nation.

Fourthly, The Company labouring, all this time, under the pressure of many unsurmountable Difficulties and Discouragements, by reason of frequent Captures, and most injurious Combinations against them, both at Home and Abroad, were still nevertheless forced

forced to be at a continued vast Charge and Expence in maintaining their Forts and Settlements, and keeping up the face of a Trade, until they could have a fair opportunity of laying their Case before the Parliament: But finding it impracticable for either themselves or the separate Traders, to Trade profitably, on the foot of the present Constitution, have not Traded for near so much as otherways they would have done. So that the Planters in *America* do grievously complain that, these five or six Years past, the Company and separate Traders together, have not supplied them, with sufficient Numbers of *Negroes*; and that these they get, do cost them more than double the Prices which they formerly paid for them.

From all which Premises, it may easily be demonstrated:

First, That the preservation and improvement of the Trade to *Africa*, is a matter of very high importance to this Kingdom, and the Plantations thereunto belonging.

Secondly, That Forts and Settlements on the Coast, and Alliances with the Natives, are absolutely necessary for the Defence, Preservation and Improvement of that Trade.

Thirdly, That, by any other Method, than that of a Joint-Stock, with exclusive Priviledges, the said Forts, Settlements and Alliances can never be effectually maintain'd, and the said Trade carried on, so as to be made a Permanent, Creditable and Advantageous Trade to *Britain*.

Tho', by what is already said, the Truth of the aforesaid three Propositions is made very evident; yet for enforcing the same further, the following Considerations are subjoin'd.

First, There was never yet any substantial Commerce in the World carried on, but by means of mutual Alliances and Confederations made with the Natives, how Barbarous soever: And it is manifest, that Alliances of this Nature can be made only by Princes themselves, or by Powers derived from them, to Bodies Politick and Communities; who are Stable, Permanent and Responsible; continually ready upon the Place, by their Agents, to

expostulate with, or give satisfaction to their Allies: Which can never be maintain'd with Individuals or single Persons, who being Transient and Morral; no Man knows where to find them, when they happen to commit any Injuries.

Secondly, Without some fix'd Society, vested with a considerable Joint-Stock and suitable Priviledges, there can be no sure dependance upon having the *British* Plantations supplied duly with sufficient Numbers of *Negroes*, at moderate or certain Rates; nor upon making any advantageous Contracts with the *Spaniards*, or *Portuguese*, to furnish them with *Negroes* in their *West-Indies*.

Thirdly, It's very observable that all the Attempts ever made of Trading from hence, either to the *East-Indies*, or the Coast of *Africa*, in the Method of an open Trade, have proved always abortive; For while the Trade to the *East-Indies* lay open from the Year 1653, to the Year 1657, that Method proved so very destructive to the several private Traders thither; that the Governing Power, at that time, found it necessary to unite them all into one Joint-Company, with a Joint-Stock: And tho' in the Year 1698, an Act of Parliament was obtain'd for laying that Trade open, in the Method of a regulated Company; yet upon tryal, the separate Traders, who procured that Act, found it necessary to unite themselves, so as to Trade only with one Joint-Stock: And tho' there was seemingly an irreconcilable Contest between the New and Old Company, yet both of them became so sensible of the destructive Consequences of Trading by a divided Interest, that they are now at last happily Join'd into one Company, having the same Joint-Stock, Interest and Designs. It is to be remembred likewise, that while the Trade to *Africa* was laid open, before the Restauration of King *Charles II.* the *Dutch-Company* took such Advantages of the separate Traders that their Losses were computed to about 300000 *l.* as appear'd thereafter by their Petitions to the King: Whereupon His Majesty in the Year 1662, granted a Charter to the present Company's Predecessors.

Fourthly, To obviate the private Traders groundless Suggestions, concerning the Company's Forts and Settlements, it is thought fit to be made known, that the *Royal African-Company* paid 34000 *l.* to their Predecessors, for the few Forts and Settlements, which remained in their Possession, at the time of surrendring their Charter; and these were only two on the North Coast, viz. *James-Island* and *Scerra-Leon*, and one upon the Gold-Coast, viz. *Cape-Corfe-Castle*; which were then but in a very ordinary condition, and out of repair. But the Company has, since that time, bought the *Danes-Fort*, rebuilt and enlarged the said Forts and Settlements, and built the several other Fortifications of *Sherbrow*, *Dickes-Cove*, *Succundee*, *Commenda*, *Queen Ann's-Point*, *Annamaboe*, *Winebah*, *Accra* and *Whidah*, besides the settling several other
Factories

Factories on the Gold-Coast: The Charge of all which, together with that of providing them with Great-Guns, Small Arms, Ammunition and Stores of all Sorts, their constant Supplies and Repairs, and the Interest of that Money, so long ago advanced and laid out, has amounted to several Hundred Thousand Pounds: So that all things considered, the Company's present estimation of them, will appear to be very moderate, whatever the private Traders do or may Maliciously suggest to the contrary.

Upon the whole Matter, as the Company, under all these Discouragements formerly mention'd, have (in order to preserve this Trade from falling into the hands of other Nations) paid in several additional Sums of Money, upon the respective Shares of their Joint-Stock; so now, that they may not lose the reasonable hopes of reaping some benefit, at last, from the foundation, which they have laid of securing so essential a Trade to the Nation, they are still willing to advance a further Stock, sufficient to support and improve the said Trade, in every Branch thereof, if they may receive suitable encouragement from the Parliament, for enabling them to carry on the same.

It is an easie thing to unsettle and destroy a Trade, not without great Labour, Danger and Expence acquired. But it will be very difficult to regain it, if once lost, especially this of *Guinea*, which all our Neighbour Nations so earnestly thirst to gain from us; and which if deserted but for a very short space of time, would certainly be possessed either by the *French* or *Dutch*, so as not likely to be regain'd from them. And therefore it is hoped, that it will be Maturely and Seriously considered how great a Damage the Loss of this Trade would be to the Kingdom. And that, it will evidently appear, the only means to preserve the same, is by investing the Company with Priviledges suitable to those granted to the Companies of other Nations.

References on the Gold Coast, &c. &c. of all which, together
with that of providing for the Gold Coast, Small Arms, Am-
munition and stores of all sorts, and for the purchase of Re-
giments, and the interest on that money, to be paid and advanced and
paid out, but amounting to less than the interest on the money
So that all things considered, the Company's present situation
of affairs will appear to be very different from what the private
traders do or may naturally imagine to be the case.

Upon the whole, therefore, as the Company, under all these Dis-
advantages, is to be maintained, have (in order to preserve
the Trade) falling into the hands of other Nations) paid in
federal additional sums of money, upon the respective shares of
their joint stock, it may be said, that they may not be the reasonable
holders of making some benefit at last, from the foundation, which
they have laid of securing to themselves a Trade to the Nation,
they are still willing to advance a further Stock, sufficient to sup-
port and improve the said Trade, in every branch thereof, if they
may receive suitable encouragement from the Parliament, for en-
abling them to carry on the same.

It is an odd thing to observe and destroy a Trade, not with-
out great Effort, Labour and Expence applied. But it will be
very difficult to regain it, if once lost, especially this of Guinea,
which all our Neighbouring Nations so earnestly strive to gain from
us, and which, if we lose, will be a great loss to us.
It is not likely to be regained from them. And therefore it is hoped,
that it will be maintained and seriously considered how great a
Loss of this Trade would be to the Kingdom. And
the only means to preserve the
the Company's Privileges suitable to
the Company's of Africa.

**A
MEMORIAL
Touching the Na-
ture and State
of the Trade to
AFRICA**

By J. Amos Rogers